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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the forms of experience associated with immigration and settlement that are likely to influence the course of adaptation, adjustment, and development of Hispanic immigrant children. Several lines of research and theory on psychosocial stress, coping, and development were reviewed and examined for their relevance to understanding the adjustment of immigrants. An evolving theoretical framework was elaborated and some testable hypotheses derived. The principal aims of this paper are: (1) to add some measure of conceptual clarity to the topic; (2) to stimulate further research; and (3) to raise the consciousness level of applied professionals and policymakers. The topic reflects a fundamental element of the U.S.'s character: the effective incorporation of new arrivals into the ongoing social order. The model postulates the presence of variables antedating immigration and moderator or mediating variables between the stresses surrounding immigration and settlement and the child's adaptation, development, and adjustment over time. These variables include characteristics of the community of origin, the background of the child and family, and conditions and processes in the country of entrance. The model brings forth the necessity of considering the point in the person's lifecycle at which immigration takes place. (Contains 1 figure, a diagram of the model, and 113 references.) (SLD)

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PSYCHOSOCIAL STRESS, COPING, AND DEVELOPMENT OF HISPANIC IMMIGRANT CHILDREN

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Educational Testing Service
Princeton, New Jersey
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Psychosocial Stress, Coping, and Development of Hispanic Immigrant Children*

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Loss, separation, and the requirement to adapt to new and changing life circumstances are interpersonal processes--often traumatic--to which all individuals and families are subjected at various points during their lifetimes. There are, however, other events of extraordinary intensity that involve personal uprooting, loss, and separation--circumstances that frequently induce family disruption and mental suffering and that cause markedly abrupt social and cultural discontinuities. These events place enormous demands on the individual for personal change and adaptation. One such event is immigration; and among those who feel the impact of this experience are Hispanic children who immigrate to the United States. These children and their families must adapt to a new and markedly different social, cultural, linguistic, and climatic environment. Although there is generally no agreed-upon definition of the term "stress" (see Garmezy & Rutter, 1983), almost everyone will agree that immigration is a potentially severe stressful process.

There has been a surge in Hispanic immigration in recent years, and the Hispanic population is expected to continue to grow at a much more rapid rate than perhaps any other segment of the population (Moore & Pachon, 1985; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1986, 1988). Demographic, social, political, and

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economic factors in Central and South America and in the Caribbean are such that, by all indications, these regions will continue to be a prime source of both documented and undocumented immigration. The United States will attract, in large numbers, families and individuals from the many Spanish-speaking nations that have population pressures and where the future appears troubled (Inter-American Dialogue, 1988; Morris, 1985).

Some children from Hispanic immigrant families adapt quite successfully to their new environment, and--in spite of unusually difficult circumstances--some even outperform the academic and social norms of U.S. natives. But many others fare less well; for example, many adapt poorly to their role as students in U.S. schools, thus further complicating their prospects and limiting their opportunities once they become adolescents and young adults. Indeed, the prevalence of educational and mental health problems among Hispanic children appears to rise as a function of length of stay in this country (Baral, 1979; Borjas & Tienda, 1985; Canino, Earley, & Rogler, 1980; Fernandez & Nielsen, 1986; Valdez, 1986). Although there are some differences among the many U.S. Hispanic ethnic groups (for example, Mexican-American, mainland Puerto Rican, Cuban-American, Dominican-American, Salvadoran-American, to name a few) with regard to such sociodemographic variables as educational and occupational attainment, there is also considerable overlap, and the within-group variation is generally greater than that among group averages (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1988). Similarly, anecdotal evidence suggests a broad range of variation in the coping strategies, adjustment, development, and adaptation of Hispanic immigrant children. These children also vary widely in their apparent "vulnerability" to the events and processes associated with their immigration and settlement experiences. Briefly consider two Hispanic children, Andrés and Gualberto--

keep in mind, however, that the contrast between them is but a mere hint to what is indeed a highly diverse population with a very broad and complex spectrum of particular circumstances.

Andrés. Andrés attends the sixth grade class of a U.S. public school. It is early spring, and the snow is beginning to melt. Andrés had never seen snow until two years ago, when he first arrived in this country with his family. The decision to emigrate took place in the aftermath of his uncle's death. His uncle had been a bystander discharging his daily duties as postman when he was caught in the crossfire between a band of urban guerrillas and government forces. Andrés's parents have not yet established close relationships here, but Andrés has already developed warm friendships with other children in the neighborhood.

Andrés spoke no English when the family first arrived in the United States, and his father spoke only a little learned from a Business English course. Nevertheless, Andrés is described today by his teachers as very attentive, industrious, and well behaved in class. They further describe him as highly motivated to master the English language, to learn the subject matter, to do the daily assignments, and to become familiar with "the way of doing things" here. He receives some help from Mrs. Vincent, an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teacher. However, the amount of time that Mrs. Vincent is able to devote to Andrés is very limited because, as a result of cutbacks in federal funding, she is the only ESL or bilingual-education teacher in the school district this year, and she must divide her time among four different school buildings.

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At age twelve, Andrés is a confident, seemingly happy child, who performs well in his schoolwork.

Gualberto. Gualberto, too, is in a sixth grade class. His parents enrolled him last summer, shortly after their arrival in this country. Gualberto's father had decided to leave their closely-knit extended family and come to the United States because he was very dissatisfied with his career opportunities in his country and was frustrated about their insecure economic prospects.

Gualberto was an above-average student in his country. However, here he is having serious difficulties in school. He is frequently caught fighting with other students and is described by his teachers as uncooperative. Language is not much of a problem, because he had learned a fair amount of English from a tutor in his native community. Indeed, he and his sister already speak English with one another at home, thus frustrating their mother, who does not understand the new language.

Meanwhile, Gualberto's school problems are getting worse. At age 11 1/2, he expresses considerable dislike for school, does poorly in his schoolwork, is frequently absent, and quarrels often with his classmates.

Why did these two Hispanic children with histories of loss, separation, and physical dislocation emerge at opposite ends of the academic and social adjustment spectrum by the sixth grade? Specifically, what factors allowed Andrés to excel against multiple odds? What variables explain why Gualberto has adapted so poorly to his role as student in the new environment? And more generally, what factors can prevent the downward trend experienced by, and often expected of (Orum, 1986), so many U.S. Hispanic children?

Prompted by these considerations, this chapter focuses on the general question: Which forms of experience associated with immigration and settlement are likely to influence the course of adaptation, adjustment, and development of Hispanic immigrant children? Several lines of research and theory on psychosocial stress, coping, and human development are reviewed, and their relevance to our understanding of the processes implied by this question are explored. Some answers are suggested, and clues identified, about "protective" and "risk" factors (Garmezy, 1985; Rutter, 1979) in the adaptation and development of these children and their families. In order to provide a vehicle for venturing into this broad and complex topic, an evolving conceptual framework is elaborated, and testable hypotheses are derived from it. The principal aims of the chapter are heuristic: (a) to add some measure of conceptual clarity to the topic, (b) to stimulate further research, and (c) to raise the consciousness level of applied professionals and policymakers. The topic reflects a fundamental element of this nation's character: the effective incorporation of new arrivals into the ongoing social order.

TOWARD PREVENTIVE APPROACHES

When applied to other problems, research approaches that seek to identify "risk factors" have yielded useful information by identifying variables linked to the probability of developmental problems. Such factors include, for example, intense stress in the caregiving environment resulting from parental mental illness, family discord, or economic deprivation (for recent reviews, see, e.g., Farran & McKinney, 1986; Garmezy & Rutter, 1983; Honig, 1984). Although the tendency has been to focus on the "things that go wrong," the potential for prevention lies in increasing our knowledge and

understanding of the reasons "why some children are not damaged" (Rutter, 1979, p. 49). For even under the most severely disruptive circumstances or handicaps, some children appear to develop stable, healthy, and productive personalities, thus displaying a marked degree of resilience--that is, the ability to recover from or easily adjust to misfortune or sustained life stress (Werner, 1984).

In their search for the factors that account for such resilience, some researchers are turning their attention to the coping patterns of children of divorced parents (e.g., Hetherington, Cox, & Cox, 1978, 1982). Others have uncovered sources of strength and gentleness among children affected by contemporary wars (for reviews see, e.g., Garmezy, 1983; Werner, 1984). And a few have studied the lives of (non-immigrant) minority children who did exceptionally well in school in spite of chronic poverty and discrimination (e.g., Clark, 1983; Gándara, 1982; Shipman, Boroson, Bridgeman, Gant, & Mikovsky, 1976).

Among children undergoing unusually severe or prolonged stressful events, there are some who have demonstrated unusual, exemplary performance. Something about their individual or family characteristics, or characteristics of people and situations outside the family, or some pattern or combination of these characteristics either compensated for, challenged, or protected them against the adverse effects of stressful life events. Their performance has inspired some writers to refer to them in such eloquent terms as "stress-resistant" (Garmezy & Tellegen, 1984), "invulnerable" (Anthony, 1974), and "vulnerable but invincible" (Werner & Smith, 1982).

The reasons for such heartening outcomes are not yet known. We have some clues and hypotheses, however, as we shall see below.

A MULTIVARIATE MODEL

A recent review of family stress theory and data over the past three decades (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983) suggests that individual and family outcomes following the impact of stressors and crises are the by-product of multiple factors in interaction with each other (see also Canino et al., 1980; Cervantes & Castro, 1985; Rogler, Gurak, & Cooney, 1987). This conclusion implies that a promising research strategy for studying coping and adaptation among immigrant children is to employ a multivariate model where several domains of variables--identified not only from prior research studies but also from less systematic observations--are addressed simultaneously. In this way, the individual and collective contributions of these variables can be ascertained. The overarching research question then becomes: What kinds of circumstances or events, mediated by what perceptions thereof, interacting with what characteristics of the individual, the family, and the "sending" and "receiving" communities, shape the course of the Hispanic immigrant child's coping strategies, adaptation, adjustment, and development in the new society?

The conceptual model here proposed is depicted schematically in Figure 1. A central feature of this model is that it postulates the presence of moderator or mediating variables between the stresses of immigration and the child's adaptation, adjustment, and development over time. To illustrate, it is helpful to borrow Rahe's (1974) metaphor of optical lenses and filters. Adapting the metaphor to the issue at hand, we can think of environmental events as "light rays" representing an individual's exposure to life changes. Some characteristics of the individual--such as the manner of perceiving (i.e., construing, interpreting) certain life events--may act as "light filters" that alter the intensity of various life events. For example, a

particular perception, expectation, or belief may intensify the impact of a life change, whereas a different perception or expectation may lessen it. The impact of some life-change events will be "diffracted away" by a subsequent experience or a contextual variable; others will pass through with little "deflection." Along this pathway there are several chances for life changes to be handled in such a way that they never have a negative impact on the Hispanic immigrant child's psychosocial or educational development, or in a manner that they instead provide a stimulus for superior achievement. Another characteristic of the model proposed here is its emphasis on continuous change, development, and reciprocal influences as on-going processes over time.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Let us now turn to some specific variables and hypotheses.

Characteristics of the Sending Community

We should expect to find considerable diversity in the characteristics of the Hispanic immigrants' communities of origin. For example, the sending communities[1] are likely to vary in population density, degree of urbanicity, intensity of political/military strife, type of economy and political system, and economic circumstances and prospects. These and other (objective and perceived) characteristics of the sending community are likely to be associated--directly or indirectly--with other factors in the model, including the choice of coping strategies and the course of adjustment and adaptation in the receiving community. The mechanisms accounting for this association are hypothesized to hinge on the contrasts between the receiving

and sending communities. The discontinuity hypothesis (see, e.g., Laosa, 1977b, 1979, 1982) predicts that such contrasts will partly explain the course of adaptation. A similar prediction can be made from person-environment fit theory (see, e.g., French, Doehrman, Davis-Sacks, & Vinokur, 1983). That is, the greater the articulated "continuity" between the sending and receiving community contexts or the "fit" between the characteristics of the person and those of the host environment, the more rapid and successful the adaptation and the healthier the adjustment.

We also should expect to find wide diversity in the circumstances surrounding immigration. In many instances, these circumstances will arise from characteristics of the sending and receiving communities. Consider that the causes of movements of human populations are quite diverse, including, for example, flows of skilled technicians and professionals in search of opportunities denied them in their homelands; displacements of manual labor moving permanently or temporarily to meet labor needs in the receiving economy; and refugee movements forced by political repression (Portes & Bach, 1985). Although typically such diversity is studied at the level of central tendencies between national-origin groups, significant individual differences doubtless occur within groups. It seems important to recognize explicitly the distinct character of each individual's or family's immigration and to assess the influence of its particular circumstances.

Family Pre-migration Life Style and Background Characteristics

Social antecedents, that is, background characteristics referring to the "stock of human capital" that immigrants bring with them must be considered in evaluating or predicting how successfully they adjust. Among such characteristics are formal education level, specific marketable skills,

occupational experience, English-language proficiency, age, and physical health. These, like other variables in the model, can have both direct and indirect effects. For example, formal schooling level is likely to be important not only in fulfilling requirements for occupational level entry--as Rogg and Cooney (1980) found was true of Cuban émigrés in West New York--but the more highly schooled immigrants may be more likely to adhere to such U.S. mainstream values as individualism and futurism, which in turn may influence their choice of coping strategies (see also Laosa, 1982).

The nature of the child-family relationships in the sending community, including those aspects related to the child's intellectual stimulation, are likely to be predictive not only of similar qualities of family life in the receiving community, but also predictive of the child's scholastic achievement (see, e.g., Henderson, 1981; Laosa & Sigel, 1982; Marjoribanks, 1979).

"Pile Up" of Stressors

A "piling up" of life changes during the period preceding, attending, and following immigration is also expected to account for variance in the child's adaptation and adjustment. Rutter (1979) has noted insightfully that most research data are not analyzed in such a way as to reveal the cumulative and interactive effects of single stresses. The usual analytic approaches permit us to assess whether or not a particular stress has a statistical effect after taking into account its association with other forms of stress or disadvantage. Whereas the results of such analyses can reveal whether the stressor has an effect over and above that of other factors, they do not tell us whether or not the stressor has an effect when it occurs on its own. Using a different type of analysis, Rutter obtained interesting and

surprising results, revealing that children with only one risk factor--that is, those with a single stressful event or situation--were no more likely to show psychiatric disorder than children with no risk factors at all. On the other hand, when two stressors occurred together, the risk increased fourfold, and with yet more concurrent stresses, the risk rose several times further. This finding led Rutter to the conclusion that "the stresses potentiated each other" so that the combination of stresses "provided very much more than a summation of the effects of separate stresses considered singly" (1979, pp. 52-53).

For an immigrant child, a "piling up" of stresses may well occur in connection with the events and experiences surrounding the immigration and settlement. On the basis of Rutter's finding, it is reasonable to hypothesize that such a "pile up" will have the effect of magnifying the stressful effects of immigration--all other things equal--and thus, for example, increase the probability of physical illness or psychological problems during the settlement period.

Characteristics of the Receiving Community

Reception factors in the receiving community, such as relevant employment opportunities, the presence of a Hispanic "enclave," the availability of community-based social supports, and community attitudes toward the newcomers must be considered among the variables that can influence the family's coping strategies and course of adaptation and development.

Social supports. A series of research reviews published in the mid-1970s (e.g., Caplan, 1974; Cassell, 1974; Cobb, 1976; Haggerty, Roghmann, & Pless, 1975) sparked the present interest in social supports. The evidence

reviewed in these works suggested a causal link between social support and mental and physical health. Neighborhoods, family and kinship, and mutual self-help groups are among the major social support networks that have been studied (for reviews see, e.g., House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988; McCubbin, Joy, Cauble, Comeau, Patterson, & Needle, 1980).

Poignant insights into some of the roles of social supports are provided by Melville's (1981) anthropological study of Mexican women who had migrated to Houston, a major urban metropolis in the southwestern United States. The outstanding source of stress among these women was the loneliness caused by the separation from the extended family, from familiar and predictable neighbors, and from well-known, culturally meaningful surroundings; this separation from a customary social network and from frequent and numerous social contacts created a strain. Housing could not always be found in locations proximate to relatives or friends who had previously immigrated. Loneliness was compounded for those women who had to remain at home all day to care for the children. Their contacts were often limited to a neighbor or two, and for some, it was difficult to find these. As one of Melville's (1981) informants put it, "Here, people have air conditioning and leave their doors and windows closed." Social support factors that bear on the parents and influence their psychological well-being (e.g., depression) are likely to affect the quality of the parent-child relationship, and hence, indirectly influence the child's own adjustment, adaptation, and development in the new environment.

Studies pointing to the presence of familial ties as buffers against health breakdown suggest that a small, densely interconnected network of intimate ties is critical to individual well-being (Pilisuk & Parks, 1983). But such ties, however important, may be insufficient for certain types of

psychosocial transition (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). For example, job loss is an event for which the dense, kinship-dominated network can typically provide consolation but not reassurance or assistance in finding new employment. Thus, for the immigrant parent to branch out into the new areas of commitment required by the receiving community, a larger network of weaker ties may also be critical to the family's successful adaptation.

Additional evidence of the importance of social supports and related situational and contextual factors comes from clinical studies of children who underwent displacement and evacuation during World War II and in more recent civil strife in the Middle East and Ireland (Garmezy, 1983). The evidence generally points to the quality of the relationship between the child and family members as a key variable distinguishing between children who were best able to sustain uprooting and those who had more difficulty. Another type of protective factor that can help contain the effects of stress resulting from uprooting is the model behavior presented by significant others in the child's life, including parents, guardians, teachers, counselors, and peers (Garmezy, 1983). The literature also makes reference to the role of communal ideology expressed by adults and to the efforts of significant adult figures to inculcate a sense of security in the children. Other evidence comes from studies of minority persons whose educational and occupational achievements have surpassed even the norm of those from more privileged backgrounds (e.g., Clark, 1983; Gándara, 1982; Shipman et al., 1976); these studies, too, point to the influence of the parent-child relationship or of some other aspect of the home environment.

In the framework proposed here, the concept of social support includes three major categories of support: (a) interpersonal transactions that provide emotional support and esteem, leading the individual to believe that

he or she is cared for, loved, and esteemed and that he or she belongs to a network of communication involving mutual understanding (Cobb, 1976); (b) information disseminated with regard to problem-solving and new social contacts for help (Granovetter, 1973, 1983); and (c) service agencies and other sources of material aid and tangible services such as child care, tutoring, language lessons, help with school homework, financial aid, and housing.

Both the availability and accessibility of social supports and their ability to provide support have been found to vary greatly (McCubbin et al., 1980), and such variability is likely to increase for Hispanic immigrant families. For example, the relationship between Hispanic immigrants and social supports can be affected by such variables as language proficiency and cultural beliefs and values.

Attitudes toward newcomers. Negative attitudes, stereotypes, and prejudices are sometimes associated with certain ethnic, racial, and language groups in the United States. By virtue of mere membership in such a group, the immigrant may be denied the same opportunities and experiences that normally are extended readily to, say, White, native English speakers. Being the subject of prejudice or discrimination, whether subtle or overt, can change and intensify the meaning and impact of normative societal stressors (McAdoo, 1983; Peters & Massey, 1983). The phenomenon may go beyond person-to-person interaction in the neighborhood, in the school, or on the work site. Indeed, negative images about particular groups may be part of the mainstream culture and hence difficult to escape, for they are projected continuously throughout the society--through TV, school textbooks, ethnic jokes, and personal experiences when different groups come in contact with one another (McAdoo, 1983). These concerns are important reasons for

considering the role of community attitudes toward the immigrant group and, conversely, the manner in which the immigrant responds to and copes with prejudice and discrimination when they emerge. Stereotyped images may surface, for example, when teachers implicitly do not expect as much from the immigrant child and therefore are given less in return (Brophy & Good, 1974; Laosa, 1977a) or when employers do not consider members of certain groups capable of doing a job regardless of their individual ability or training. Moreover, the duality that immigrants may experience as they strive to obtain a balance between their educational or economic aspirations, often found only in the mainstream world, and their cultural and language roots may engender psychological conflict and thus further stress (Fordham, 1988; McAdoo, 1983).

The impact of stressors may depend in part on one's cognitive appraisal of the situation, as the following discussion suggests.

Cognitive Appraisal and Coping

It now appears that life events cannot be meaningfully studied without reference to how the individual perceives (i.e., construes) such events. Research suggests that one's cognitive appraisal of life events strongly influences how one responds to them (for reviews of research see, e.g., Hamilton & Warburton, 1979). The same event may be perceived by different persons as irrelevant, benign, and positive, or threatening and harmful. Hinkle (1974) cites the example of the Hungarian refugees at the time of their flight during their revolt in the mid-fifties. Hinkle reports that for many of them, the physical dislocation and the many changes they experienced during the revolt and subsequent flight were accompanied by an element of pleasurable excitement and anticipation and by an improvement in their general health and well-being; for others, however, such life changes can be

painful, with negative consequences. The general hypothesis here is that two individuals may differ widely in their perception (i.e., construal) of the same or a similar event, and that this difference is likely to result in divergent ways of coping and implications for adaptation.

Accordingly, we should expect to find wide variation among Hispanic immigrants' cognitive appraisals of the events surrounding their losses, dislocation, and life in the new environment. Where some of them will see opportunities and challenges to be mastered, others will see unwanted circumstances to be resisted or passively endured. The Hispanic immigrants' cognitive appraisals of the events and prospects surrounding their immigration and settlement are hypothesized to be important factors contributing to their choice of coping strategies and their adaptation to the new environment.

Primary and secondary appraisal. Lazarus (1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) has identified two kinds of cognitive appraisal: primary and secondary.[2] The term primary appraisal is given to the process of evaluating the significance of an event for one's well-being. Primary appraisals come in three forms: judgments that the event is either irrelevant, benign-positive, or stressful. Three kinds of stressful appraisal are postulated: harm/loss, threat, or challenge. Harm/ loss refers to injury or damage already done, as in the loss of a loved one or damage to physical function, social esteem, self-esteem, existential meaning, etc. Threat can refer to the same kind of injuries, but the term signifies that they are anticipated but have not yet occurred. Challenge means an opportunity for growth, mastery, or gain. A hypothesis about the causal antecedents of threat and challenge is that the former is more likely when one assumes that the specific environment is hostile and dangerous and that one lacks the

resources for mastering it. Challenge, on the other hand, arises when the environmental demands are seen as difficult but not impossible to manage, and that drawing upon skills that one has or can acquire offers a genuine prospect for mastery. In Lazarus's framework, the distinction between harm/loss, threat, and challenge may be very important not only in affecting the coping process itself and the effectiveness with which coping skills are used, but also in their divergent consequences for morale and somatic health.

Another form of appraisal also appears to be important. The term secondary appraisal refers to conceptualizing the implications of the event in terms of coping and resource options (Folkman, Schaefer, & Lazarus, 1979). In secondary appraisal, the answer to the question, "What can I do about the trouble?" centers on evaluating the availability of suitable coping strategies--that is, on the goodness of fit among task demands, coping resources, and personal agendas. If coping is defined as "efforts, both action oriented and intrapsychic, to manage (i.e., master, tolerate, reduce, minimize) environmental and internal demands and conflicts among them, which tax or exceed a person's resources" (Folkman et al., 1979, pp. 282-283), then the range of coping processes that can be employed is broad. Such processes encompass at least four main categories: information search, direct action, inhibition of action, and intrapsychic modes. These coping processes can have at least two main functions: to alter the person-environment relationship (instrumental or problem-solving) or to regulate the stress and distress reaction (palliative).

Coping resources can be drawn from within the person or from the environment, and they include at least five categories: health/energy/morale, problem-solving skills, social networks, utilitarian resources (e.g., money, social agencies), and beliefs (Folkman et al., 1979). Thus, an

important point is to distinguish between coping resources and the specific coping processes actually used in a given situation. The presence of a coping resource does not mean that it inevitably will be used when required.

Self-efficacy and locus of control. Of the five categories of coping resources that Lazarus and associates (Folkman et al., 1979; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) mention, one in particular, which they label beliefs, has psychocultural implications. In addition to perceptions and assumptions about specific events and environments (already discussed and labeled primary appraisal), people may have very general beliefs about themselves and the environment that will influence their appraisal of the specific events and environments (Lazarus, 1984). For example, Bandura (1977, 1982) and others have emphasized the belief in self-efficacy as a general, overarching resource that is hypothesized to be critical in coping. The self-efficacy construct seems conceptually related to the locus-of-control variable discussed by Rotter (1966) and Lefcourt (1976; see also Lefcourt 1981, 1983, 1984). Both refer to individual differences in adherence to the conviction that reinforcements are contingent on one's own behavior rather than being the result of luck, chance, or fate, which are unpredictable. A prediction from these theories is that to disbelieve in one's own efficacy should generate passivity and disengagement; at its extreme, such disbelief should be associated with a sense of helplessness and hopelessness, which can in turn be linked to depression (Folkman et al., 1979; Seligman, 1975). Experimental research suggests that it does not matter whether one actually has control; the important factor is thinking, or believing, one has control (Maier, 1984).

Locus of control was one of the variables that distinguished resilient from other high-risk children in the longitudinal study on the island of

Kauai (Werner & Smith, 1982). Although it is always difficult to determine the directionality of correlations, a longitudinal design such as this one can provide a reasonable basis for causal interpretations. The resilient adolescents in this study, especially girls, seemed to have greater faith in their own control of the environment than did adolescents with serious coping problems. Achievement and psychological well-being appeared to be closely related to what the youngsters believed about their environment; that is, whether they believed, as the resilient ones appeared to do, that the environment would respond to reasonable efforts, or whether they believed, as those with serious problems appeared to do, that events were random and immovable.

Some beliefs may stem from historic-sociocultural premises.

Historic-sociocultural premises. Attitudes, beliefs, and values shared within a culture provide a common basis for socialization of the child in that culture (see, e.g., Sigel, 1985). Díaz-Guerrero (1975, 1982) has proposed that these implicit attitudes, beliefs, and values constitute historic-sociocultural premises that are fundamental determinants of shared personality characteristics within a given culture. These premises are deep-seated beliefs or assumptions about life transmitted from one generation to the next and are held by a majority belonging to the culture, subculture, or group. An example of an important dimension reflecting a historic-sociocultural premise is the variable labeled affiliative obedience vs. active self-assertion. Research by Díaz-Guerrero and his colleagues has revealed striking cross-national differences along this dimension. In a study of 14-year-old boys, for example, these researchers found that the majority in the United States subscribed to active self-assertion, whereas their Mexican counterparts preferred affiliative obedience. The most

striking differences between cultures appeared for the low socioeconomic strata, suggesting that this segment of the population is the primary carrier of traditional sociocultural premises inherited from the past (Holtzman, Díaz-Guerrero, & Swartz, 1975).[3]

To the extent that historic-sociocultural premises may influence behavior, cultural groups can be expected to differ in their choice of coping strategies. An immigrant child may already possess a well-developed repertoire of coping strategies (or competencies), which are effective in and appropriate to the child's native cultural context. The same coping strategies and competencies may nevertheless differ in critical ways from those preferred by members of the host culture. They may even be ineffective, inappropriate, or offensive when applied within the context of the host culture, leading the members of that culture to view the immigrant child as incompetent, unmotivated, or perversely uncooperative (Laosa, 1979).

Rogler and Cooney (1984) examined certain historic-sociocultural premises among first- and second-generation Puerto Rican parents in the (mainland) United States, in particular a belief that events are more often contingent upon chance, luck, or fate than upon one's actions. The research results showed a stronger disagreement with this belief in the second than in the first generation, implying the effects of acculturation. The data also showed that, regardless of generation, those with more years of formal schooling appeared less strongly committed to sociocultural premises associated with traditional Puerto Rican culture than those with fewer years of education, suggesting, at least partly, the effects of schooling on traditional culture (cf. Laosa, 1982). Also, first-generation men who experienced upward mobility--after leaving Puerto Rico and during their lives in the United States--expressed significantly less adherence to these

premises than those experiencing little or downward mobility. To the extent that beliefs may influence behavior, we should hypothesize that the historic-sociocultural premises of an immigrant child's native culture will predispose that child to a particular pattern of coping, adaptation, and adjustment in the receiving society.

Expectancies and causal attributions. Explanations of behavior that include cognitive appraisal as a theoretical construct bear a conceptual resemblance to those that posit motivation as a variable. The early search for an understanding of the motivational/attitudinal determinants of achievement-related behavior was stimulated by the expectancy-value theory (Atkinson, 1958; for a review see Spence & Helmreich, 1983). This theory focuses on individual differences in the motive to achieve and on the effects of subjective expectancy on both this motive and the incentive value of success. Although some investigators, using new techniques to measure achievement motives, have continued to explore the implications of motivational mediators for achievement (see Spence & Helmreich, 1983), much of the work in the last decade has shifted attention away from motivational constructs to cognitive constructs, such as causal attributions, subjective expectancies, self-concepts of abilities, perceptions of task difficulty, and subjective task value (e.g., Eccles, 1983). Theoretical models that fit into this tradition, such as Eccles's (1983), are built on the assumption that it is not reality itself that most determines one's expectancies, values, and behavior, but rather one's interpretation of that reality. The influence of reality on achievement outcomes and future goals is assumed to be mediated by causal-attribution patterns for success and failure, perceptions of one's own needs, values, and identity, as well as perceptions of characteristics of the task. Each of these factors, according to this view, plays a role in

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determining the expectancy and value associated with a particular task. Expectancy and value, in turn, are seen as influencing a whole range of achievement-related behaviors, e.g., choice of the activity, intensity of the effort expended, and actual performance.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the importance of expectancies for a variety of achievement behaviors, including academic performance, task persistence, and task choice (for reviews see Eccles, 1983; Spence & Helmreich, 1983). In her theoretical model, Eccles (1983) has proposed that students' expectancies are influenced most directly by their self-concept of ability and by their own estimate of task difficulty. Historical events, past experiences of success and failure, and cultural factors are hypothesized to be mediated through the individual's interpretations of these past events, perceptions of the expectancies of others, and identification with the goals and values of existing cultural role structures. Eccles's data on schoolchildren already provide some empirical evidence in support of her model. Although neither her theory nor her data focuses on immigrants' performance, the abovementioned features of her model bear attractive promise for the testing of hypotheses regarding immigrant children's adaptation and academic development.

The School Context

Much has been written and debated about the effects of schools, and a spate of reports on the need to upgrade educational standards in U.S. schools has recently been issued by various national and regional commissions (e.g., Board of Inquiry, 1985; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Regional Policy Committee on Minorities in Higher Education, 1987; Youth and America's future, 1988). The public controversy over

"whether schools make a difference" in reducing social inequalities has swung from the extreme pessimism of the late 1960s to the current optimistic view about the effects of schools on student progress. Among the issues that underlie the expressed concerns in today's view is the academic performance of ethnolinguistic minority students, who represent a growing proportion of the total school-age population.

Research studies and anecdotal observations by parents, educators, and students point to a variety of school contextual factors that are likely to affect the Hispanic immigrant child's coping and adaptation. These factors range from the nature of available services specifically geared to serve foreign, limited English-proficient, and cultural minority students, to school climate and organization variables that are likely to affect all students, to structural qualities such as the ethnolinguistic composition of the student body and teaching staff, and still other variables such as teacher expectancies, the frequency and nature of school-initiated and family initiated parent-teacher contact, parental involvement in the child's formal education, and peer tutoring (for research reviews see, e.g., Baker & de Kanter, 1983; Brophy & Good, 1986; Good, 1983; Good & Brophy, 1986; Gotts & Purnell, 1986; Haskins & Adams, 1983; Rutter, 1983a; Williams, Richmond, & Mason, 1986; Willig, 1985). School contextual variables are hypothesized to contribute significantly to Hispanic immigrant children's adjustment and adaptation to their role as students.

Other Relevant Variables

Space considerations do not permit a discussion of all the variables--or their many complex interrelationships--that are directly relevant to the conceptual model proposed and schematized in brief outline in Figure 1. Only

three more variables are discussed, therefore, before we turn to a consideration of developmental issues, which suffuse the entire model, pertaining as they do to virtually all the variables in it. These three final variables are among those reflecting individual characteristics of the child and the family.

Sex. A potentially important variable is sex. It appears that males are more vulnerable to physical stresses, and they seem in some respects to be also more susceptible to psychosocial traumata (e.g., LeCorgne & Laosa, 1976; Rutter, 1979; Werner & Smith, 1982), at least insofar as the effects are expressed at certain ages. Little is known about the reason for these apparent differences. The topic has recently attracted the attention of the Committee on Child Development Research and Public Policy of the National Academy of Sciences, and a committee project was organized to review the available evidence. The research evidence indicates that boys may respond more negatively than girls to some forms of psychosocial stress (Zaslow, 1987; Zaslow & Hayes, 1986). Practically nothing is known, however, about sex differences in vulnerability to immigration stresses among Hispanic schoolchildren.

Temperament. Temperament is another constitutional factor that has been implicated as relevant to the study of stress. It is perhaps a worthwhile variable to study in this regard, although the research evidence on the relationship between temperament and response to stress is limited (see Rutter, 1974, 1983b), and conceptual and methodological problems plague the field of temperament research (Hubert, Wachs, Peters-Martin, & Gandour, 1982). A provocative discussion by Thomas, Chess, Sillen, and Mendez (1974) suggests the potential relevance of temperament to the adjustment of immigrant children. They reported a higher frequency of arrhythmic

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temperament (irregularity of biological functions) among their low-income New York Puerto Rican sample than in their non-Hispanic White middle-class (predominantly Jewish) sample. They attributed this group difference to more permissive socialization practices regarding the establishment of feeding and sleeping schedules among the former. That is, arrhythmicity as a temperamental characteristic during the preschool years was a major source of parental concern when it occurred in the middle-class non-Hispanic families, but not when it occurred in the low-income Puerto Rican sample. Later, however, when the children entered school and were expected to adhere to its system of inflexible schedules, arrhythmicity became a serious problem of adaptation in the Puerto Rican sample. Apparently, the early parental concern with arrhythmicity was translated into attempts by the non-Hispanic sample to control or modify such behavior when it occurred in their young children. It thus seems that there may exist cultural or socioeconomic group differences in parental reactions to emerging temperamental characteristics, differences that may have consequences for the children's later adaptation to extrafamilial environments such as the school. Although these particular findings on temperament are intriguing and intuitively appealing, they apparently have not been replicated.

Legal status. The final variable to be considered here that warrants examination because of its potential relevance to the psychosocial adaptation and adjustment of immigrant children is the status of their or their family's presence in the country. Undocumented aliens is a term referring to persons illegally in the United States, namely, without residential, immigrant, or refugee status. An "illegal alien" is subject to deportation. Probably the largest group of undocumented aliens are among the Hispanics, particularly Mexican Americans. These are often thought to be single male migratory

workers, but it appears that a large number are families with children; many have been here for a long time (Jenkins, 1983). Children in this status may have family-based emotional supports and economic support from working parents, but these families are likely to lack security, a sense of permanence, and social acceptance. They may feel threatened by the loss of health and education services because of their uncertain legal position.

There is some empirical support for the hypothesis that undocumented status adds significantly to the stressors generally experienced by immigrants in the United States. In a study of comparative stress among documented and undocumented Mexican families, Salcido (1979) found a high stress level for 52% of the undocumented families studied, but for only 20% of the documented families. The problems become more complex when some members of the family are documented and others not. An undocumented alien mother, for example, may have a child born in the United States in need of health services, but treatment for the citizen child could subject the mother to possible deportation (Jenkins, 1983). There have been recent changes in immigration policies. The effect of these policy changes on the well-being of immigrant children and families bears study.

Fundamental to the conceptual model proposed in this chapter is a developmental perspective on the individual, a view to which we now turn.

TOWARD A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH

Stressful experiences generally involve a <u>changing</u> relationship between person and environment, as the encounter unfolds (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The appraisal and coping processes and the emotional reactions to them, for example, may not remain the same over time because of changes in the situation or in the subjective evaluation of its significance or meaning.

Social supports, too, change and develop as time elapses from the time of the immigrant's arrival and opportunities for contact with the new environment accrue. It is important, therefore, to consider coping, adaptation, and adjustment as processes that occur over time. In this way, one's data pertaining to the mediating or moderator variables in the conceptual model can reflect how such variables change the status and outcome of the stress process in the temporal flow of events (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

It is also important to consider the immigrant person as a developing organism. At the same time that the child is experiencing the events of immigration and settlement, he or she is also undergoing normative developmental changes along cognitive, personality, and physical dimensions. In this regard, it is helpful to view human development as a process and a product of the interaction and organization between the individual's characteristics (e.g., abilities, needs, behavioral style) and the environment (e.g., societal expectations, demands, opportunities) (Laosa, 1979).

Psychosocial theories (see, e.g., Newman & Newman, 1984) emphasize the capacity of the person to contribute to his or her own development as a continuing process across the life span from infancy through later adulthood. Each phase in this development contains its own developmental tasks, namely, a set of skills and competencies that are acquired as the person gains increased mastery of the environment. Mastery of the tasks of later phases of development often depends on the acquisition of earlier ones. Language development, for example, is a primary task of toddlerhood, when many of the elements of language skill emerge. A psychosocial crisis, in Erikson's (1963) theory, refers to one's psychological efforts to adjust to the demands of the social environment at each stage of development. The word crisis in this

context refers to a normal set of stresses and strains rather than to an extraordinary set of punishing events. At each stage of development the society in which one lives makes certain psychic demands on the individual. These demands, which differ from stage to stage, are experienced as mild but persistent guidelines and expectations for behavior. This process produces a state of tension within the person that must be reduced in order for the person to proceed to the next stage. It is this tension that produces the psychosocial crisis. The crisis of a stage forces the individual to use developmental skills that have recently been mastered, and the resolutions of previous crises influences resolutions of current and future crises (Newman & Newman, 1984). Mastery of the appropriate skills and successful resolution of the normative crisis propels the person toward healthy development and adaptation.

The Eriksonian concept of psychosocial crisis is useful in considering the immigrant child's development. In contrast to the normative events in the life of a non-immigrant child, the experiences of immigrant children are extraordinary. Indeed, settlement in a new and different cultural, social, and linguistic environment places <u>extraordinary</u> psychosocial demands on the individual. These demands can profoundly affect the course of the person's development. The outcomes can be positive or deleterious. The immigrant is bombarded by competing, and sometimes conflicting, normative demands between the culture of origin and the host society. How these extraordinary psychosocial crises are resolved will depend on how these diverse demands are "negotiated" by the individual.

Szapocznik and his colleagues (Szapocznik, Scopetta, & King, 1978) observed certain of these extraordinary psychosocial crises among Cuban émigré families in the United States. In their research and clinical

practice, these psychologists identified some apparent differences in value orientations between Cuban émigrés and mainstream U.S. Anglo Americans, pointing out their implications for successful psychosocial adaptation and mental health in the former. Their clinical experience suggested that behavioral disorders (such as drug abuse and antisocial behavior) in adolescent Cuban clients tended to be accompanied by the breakdown of the culturally sanctioned (Cuban) pattern of interpersonal relations within the family, a problem that apparently was caused by conflicts stemming from the youngsters' more rapid acculturation to the U.S. mainstream culture than their parents'. In order to treat these clients, Szapocznik and his associates developed a psychotherapeutic method designed to resolve these particular problems, as follows. First, the therapist attempts to restore the traditional Cuban relational pattern in the home. Once this relational pattern is thus restored and reaffirmed, the family is taught the skills necessary to negotiate the youngster's differentiation from the family. "It is within this culturally sanctioned framework," argue Szapocznik et al., "that the [developmental] process of individuation of the youngster must take place" (p. 117). Szapocznik et al.'s work is conceptually appealing because of the attempt it represents both (a) to embed individual and family development within a particular sociocultural context and (b) to link, by this contextedness, a developmental process to adaptation and adjustment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

International migration and settlement are potentially stressful processes, frequently involving events of extraordinary intensity inducing loss, separation, mental suffering, and family disruption, and generally placing enormous demands on the individual for personal change and adaptation

to a new and markedly different social, cultural, linguistic, and climatic environment. Among those affected by these experiences are children and families who come from Spanish-speaking countries to the United States. Hispanic immigration to the United States has increased significantly in recent years, and by all indications it will continue to surge. Although some children from immigrant Hispanic families adapt quite successfully in spite of often extraordinarily difficult circumstances, many others fare less well, as evidenced by the statistics on the academic underachievement and school dropout rate for this group.

This chapter was organized around the general question: Which forms of experience associated with immigration and settlement are likely to influence the adaptation and adjustment of Hispanic immigrant children? Several lines of research and theory on psychosocial stress, coping, and development were reviewed and examined for their relevance to our understanding of the processes involved in the adaptation and adjustment of immigrants to their new environment. Some answers were suggested and clues identified regarding both protective and risk factors in the psychosocial and educational adaptation and development of these children. In an attempt to give structure to this broad and complex topic, an evolving theoretical framework was elaborated, and testable hypotheses were derived from it. A central feature of the model is that it postulates the presence of two types of variable: (a) variables antedating immigration and (b) moderator or mediating variables between the stresses surrounding immigration and settlement, on the one hand, and on the other, the child's adaptation, development, and adjustment over time. Among the variables considered in the discussion are the characteristics of the community of origin, the characteristics and lifestyle of the child and family both before and after

emigrating, the life changes surrounding immigration, the characteristics of the community where the family settles, the "piling up" of life changes, the school characteristics in both the community of origin and the receiving community, and the child's and family's cognitive appraisal of their situation. The present approach also emphasizes examining the psychosocial and environmental processes as they occur over time and the importance of considering the immigrant as a developing organism interacting reciprocally with the environment. In addition, this view brings forward the need to consider the particular point in the person's life cycle when the immigration takes place. Clearly, it would not be feasible for an investigator to include in a single empirical study all the variables discussed or implied in this chapter. The intention is, rather, to build our knowledge base systematically by accumulating answers to various "pieces" of the model across different studies--and thence to further articulate and adjust our conceptual understanding.

The study of immigrant adaptation embodies a myriad of issues and challenges. Necessarily, many variables and issues have been omitted from consideration here. Given the highly textured fabric of immigration and settlement experiences, we should expect to find a high degree of differentiation in the nature and range of these experiences and attendant stressors, coping patterns, and outcomes. Despite these complexities, the coping, adaptation, and development of immigrant children and families is an accessible and exciting area of study with implications for applied practice in mental health, education, and allied professions as well as for social planning and policy.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Research on the factors influencing Hispanic immigrant children's adaptation, adjustment, and development is in its infancy. So much so, indeed, that it is difficult to identify priorities for future research; so many issues pertaining to the topic are in urgent need of inquiry. In this final section there is space to emphasize only a few general issues and concerns. Specific ideas for future studies have been brought forward--some explicitly, others implicitly--throughout the chapter.

High on the agenda for future research should be efforts to increase the methodological sophistication of psychological and educational research on immigration. Too often, research advances on important substantive issues are slowed or impeded by a lack of adequate or appropriate measurement instruments, a dearth of relevant psychometric research, and an absence of the demographic knowledge required to draw adequate samples. Equally prominent on the agenda should be endeavors toward further conceptual advances and theoretical developments. We also need to continue to look deeper through the surface manifestations of culture (Laosa, 1979, 1981, 1983, 1988, in press) and to dispel--theoretically and empirically--one-sided notions of the processes and outcomes of immigration and settlement.

Particularly welcome would be studies with implications for the prevention of psychosocial maladjustment and educational failure, problems that continue to face so many U.S. Hispanic children and youth (Laosa, 1985). Both "risk" and "protective" factors need consideration, emphasizing a search for those variables that mediate or moderate the impact of the stresses of immigration and settlement and that predict successful adjustment and optimal development. The focus should be not only on the negative experiences and pathological effects but also on the possibility that positive outcomes may

result from negative changes if these are handled adaptively (Johnson, 1986). Perspectives are needed that will orient us to the potential for extraordinary positive growth that can be stimulated by the remarkable ranges of experience inherent in emigration and in entry to a new and vastly different cultural, social, and linguistic environment. Inquiry also must be aimed, however, at uncovering the psychological "costs" that immigrants can--unwittingly but insidiously--sometimes incur in their efforts to attain "success" as such attainment is defined by the host culture. Also needed are developmental approaches to the study of immigration, including perspectives that consider the life changes of immigration and settlement in view of their timing in relation to co-occurring developmental processes in the individual. Finally, resources must be funnelled into formulating and evaluating policies and services especially designed to increase the likelihood that all immigrant children will have the options and the opportunities to develop optimally and to cope adaptively and creatively with the cumulative psychosocial stresses of immigration and settlement. The ultimate aim is to enable, nay empower every immigrant child to realize his or her own full potential to contribute significantly to his or her adoptive country, this nation of immigrants.

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AUTHOR NOTES

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FOOTNOTES

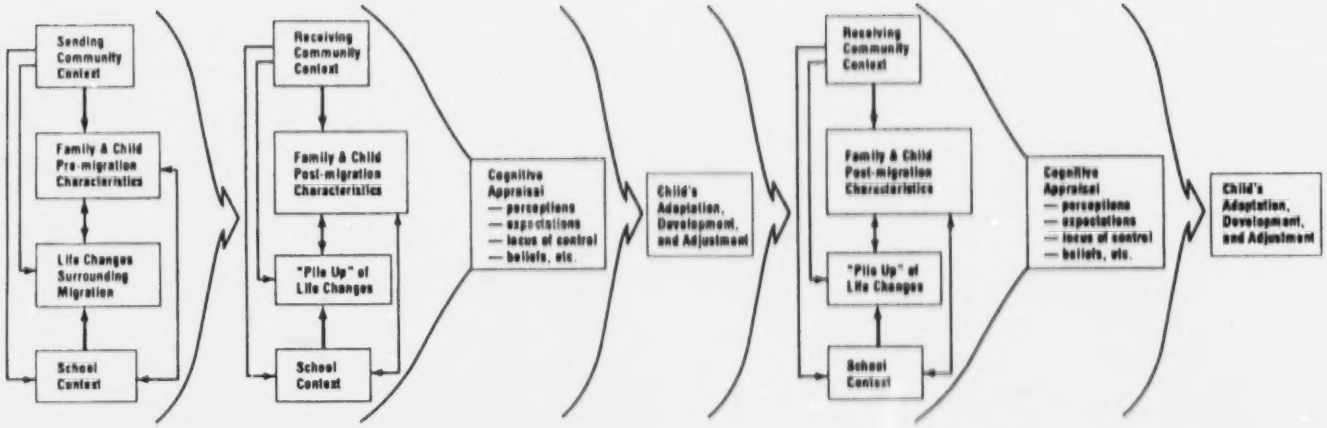
[1]In sociology and demography the terms sending and receiving communities are used to refer, respectively, to the immigrant person's communit of origin and the community where he or she settles upon arrival. These terms are not to be taken literally, for the literal sense may imply an inevitably passive role for the immigrant.

[2]The labels primary and secondary do not indicate that one form of appraisal is more important or that it precedes the other in time (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

[3]Intriguing but as yet unexplored parallels can be seen between Mexican psychiatrist Díaz-Guerrero's and Soviet psychologist L. S. Vygotsky's views (cf. Díaz-Guerrero, 1982, 1984; Luria, 1976; Scribner, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1981, p. 27).

FIGURE CAPTION

Figure 1. Conceptual framework of influences on the psychosocial and educational adaptation, development, and adjustment of immigrant schoolchildren.



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